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ABSTRACT

Child Find is the name of a public school outreach effort to identify 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children in need of supportive services. This practicum addressed the need to extend Child Find activities in an urban setting. The goals of the practicum were to (1) expand the Child Find effort using an existing program, (2) develop a videotape about Child Find for use in the community, and (3) communicate the importance of Child Find to community members. Fifteen professionals and 52 community members took part in the practicum. All participants attended presentations, which included a showing of the videotape, and completed a questionnaire designed to assess responses to the videotape. The outcomes of the practicum indicated increased awareness and knowledge of the Child Find process and of the public schools' programs. The videotape and discussions stimulated interest and curiosity. (Author/PCB)

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Increasing Awareness of Child Find for Preschool Children Through Videotape Presentations at Community and Day Care Centers

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Increasing Awareness of Child Find for Preschool Children Through Videotape Presentations at Community and Day Care Centers

by

Paul M. Operach

Cluster XXI

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood Education as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education.

Nova University

1987

Practicum Approval Sheet

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Lucille R. Caron

Assistant Superintendent
for
Special Services
New Bedford, Massachusetts

3-10-1987
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Paul M. Operach under the direction of Polly Peterson, Ph.D., Adviser. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

May 1, 1987
Date of Final Approval of Report

Polly Peterson, Ph.D.
Polly Peterson, Ph.D.
Adviser

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A warm thank you to Mrs. Lucille Caron, Assistant Superintendent for her help and ideas. Also, many thanks to the staff who voluntarily participated in the film as well as staff at area day care and public housing locations.

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Abstract

Increasing Awareness of Child Find for Preschool Children Through Videotape Presentations at Community and Day Care Centers. Operach, Paul M., 1987: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood Education. Descriptors: Early Childhood Education/Child Find/Identification/ Intervention/ Delivery Systems/ Outreach Programs/ Linking Agents/ Education Service Centers/ Parents/ Parent Awareness.

This practicum addressed the need to expand Child Find activities in a Southeastern Massachusetts city of 103,000 people. The three major goals were : (1) to expand the Child Find effort using an existing program, (2) to develop a locally produced videotape of Child Find for use in the community and, (3) to communicate the importance of Child Find to community members.

A Likert type questionnaire was used to assess responses to the videotape by a professional previewing group as well as community members. A qualitative assessment of the discussions was made by the writer. Presentations and inservices were conducted in area day care centers and public housing locations. Fifteen professionals and fifty-two community members took part in the practicum. Approximately 625 children are served by the community members in private day care centers.

The outcomes of the practicum indicated increased awareness and knowledge of the Child Find process and the public school's programs. The videotape showing the local efforts was received well by all participants. The videotape and discussions served to open-up people's interest and curiosity in a relaxed environment.

Chapter I

Introduction

The setting is a city located approximately fifty miles south of Boston, Massachusetts. It is a major fishing seaport in Southeastern Massachusetts and known for its historic role in the whaling industry in the 18th and 19th century.

Originally settled by the Yankee-New Englanders, the city's ethno-cultural base changed with the influx of Polish, French and later Irish immigrants. Assimilation of these groups occurred due to industrialization and work opportunties in textile mills and factories.

Today, the city's population is over 103,000 people. Recent arrivals include people of Portuguese, Spanish, Cape Verdean and Asian descent. This is evidenced by social programs including one of the largest bilingual-Portuguese public education programs in the Commonwealth. It is a white urban community with a predominately low socioecoonomic (SES) population.

Classified as a "big city" by the United States Bureau of Census, the city is designated as a "kind of community 1" (KOC 1) by the Massachusetts Department of Administration and Finance (Stevens, 1978). Size, demographics and financial factors of the city are used by the Commonwealth to determine the classification. This is important in state and federal funding. For example, the city expended thirty-three million

dollars for education in the 1985-1986 school year. Over ninety percent of this money was reimbursed because of KOC 1 grouping consistent with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 70.

Economic problems have plagued the area since the departure of the textile industry. Like most Southeastern Massachusetts cities, the city has lagged behind other cities of the Commonwealth in economic development. Double-digit unemployment levels have been typical of the city's problems. The unemployment rate is now estimated between 5.5 and 7 percent (Brayton, 1985). This is still higher than the state average of 3.8 percent reported by Massachusetts Department of Employment Services' Director Kristen Demong ("Jobless Rate", 1986).

Fishing, especially scalloping, is an important industry of the city. Overall catches are smaller because of federal laws enacted to preserve Atlantic fishing areas. Unskilled labor in the limited manufacturing and fishing industries exacerbates economic conditions. Electronic and sports equipment industries have survived these economic downturns.

The writer has worked in the city for sixteen years. Previously, the writer was employed as an English and Speech teacher at a regional high school for two years. In 1970, the author accepted a position as a Speech, Language and Hearing Therapist in the city. Since then, the writer has serviced students ranging in age from three through twenty-one in various schools and settings in the city.

A number of roles are provided by the Speech, Hearing and Language Therapist in the city's schools. With the inception of Child Find and preschool screening programs, the Speech, Hearing and Language Therapists have actively participated on the screening teams. The writer has participated on the screening team for over ten years.

The author belongs to Pupil Personnel Services of Special Services in the city's schools. Holding several advanced degrees and a number of specialized clinical and teaching experiences, the writer's range of involvement with regular and special needs students is extensive.

Chapter II

Problem Statement

The problem addressed by the practicum concerns the Child Find process in an urban setting. Specifically, the Child Find process lacked aggresive outreach and public awareness policies. Interestingly, this is not a unique problem to this particular setting as recently attested to in hearings before the Committee on Education and Labor in the United States House of Representatives (Leavitt, 1986).

Child Find is the name of the outreach process to identify three, four and five year old children in need of supportive services. The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, known as Public Law 94-142, as amended by Public Law 98-199, is the legal and financial basis of Child Find. In addition, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, section 504, and the 1972 - Comprehensive Special Education Law of Massachusetts, Chapter 766, paragraph 303, mandate legal and administrative-law requirements.

The school's Child Find policies relied on traditional public awareness techniques. The target groups for the dissemination of information about Child Find remained unchanged. A 1986 summer program, Project Support-Phase II, addressed the need to expand existing informational procedures. Funding for this program was provided by Public Law 94-142. Project Outreach of which Child Find is a part services children in preschool, special needs kindergarten

and early childhood areas.

Two weeks of each school year in April and May, Project Outreach has conducted a Child Find. This is a special effort in addition to other referrals during the year to provide educational screening for three, four and five year old children who may be in need of special services. One hundred and forty children were screened through Child Find in school year 1984-1985.

The supervisor for Project Outreach has the responsibility to inform the public of Child Find. This individual used conventional methods and techniques. First, letters were sent to physicians, medical agencies, social agencies (public and private), community organizations, and churches. Second, media-spot announcements were made on local television and radio stations in Portuguese, Spanish and English as applicable. Third, newsreleases were sent to the local newspapers including the Portuguese press. Fourth, notices were given to school children attending public and private schools in the city. Fifth, special telephone contacts were made by the supervisor to social agencies, medical agencies and physicians in the city.

The Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Special Services has utilized the cooperation of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council. These parents have helped to make known the special education programs in the city.

Child Find, commonly known as preschool screening,

involves the screening of three, four and five year old children. According to the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services, most referrals come from physicians followed by private schools and social agencies.

Screening has been conducted by ten early childhood specialists. The team consists of speech and language specialist (2), early childhood special education teachers (2), an adaptive physical education teacher, a hearing specialist, a vision nurse, a nurse-practitioner and the early childhood special education supervisor. Also, assigned on specific days are bilingual staff and specialists to assist in the screening of a non-English speaking child whose predominate language is Portuguese or Spanish. The screening involves eight assessments comprised of a parent/medical questionnaire, general knowledge test, speech test, language test, gross motor test, fine motor test, hearing and vision tests.

Screening assessments are not diagnosic nor engrossing instruments. Further testing is based on the screening team's review of each child's performance and history relative to age appropriate norms. Diagnostic testing has been initiated by the screening committee for a determination of "suspected" special need. An appropriate specialist evaluates the child and recommends a team evaluation if necessary. An individual educational plan may develop from the team evaluation with the written approval of the parent or guardian.

Past Child Find efforts and procedures remained

unchanged. Weatherley and Lipsky (1974) cite state and federal laws which require local educational agencies (LEA's) "to undertake a range of activities and identify children in need of special services." Early identification and intervention of special needs are predicated on the belief that such support benefits children (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). Furthermore, a Department of Education report suggests that early intervention for a handicapped child at birth to 18 years of age could save the taxpayers some $16,000.00 per child at present real dollar levels (Leavitt, 1986).

Nevertheless, the efficacy of early intervention theory has not been clearly substantiated by research (Castro & Mastropieri, 1986; Lindsay & Wedell, 1982). Maddux, Green and Homer's (1986) investigation of school entry age by category for learning disabled, mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children indicated mixed results. One point was stressed by Maddux is that learning disabled students early entrance to school may be "disadvantageous" for a certain part of the population. Age entrance for the mentally retarded was found not to be significant. This was a descriptive study and cause-effect relationships cannot be assumed.

The research concerning the benefits of early intervention deals with cognitve abilities. Castro and Mastropieri (1986) classify four factors needed for successful early intervention programs. Screening procedures

involving "at risk" learning disabled children have been disillusioning (Lindsay & Wedell, 1982). The National Task Force Report on Learning Disabilities suggests identification must occur on all educational levels with supplemental processes (Chalfant, 1985).

Public Law 94-142 and Chapter 766 require outreach. Based on 1974 and 1975 census estimates, the total special needs population from birth to nineteen was assumed to be 12.035% half of which are below the five year old age level (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1977). Local findings do not support the 1974-1975 estimates.

Although Child Find activities have remained constant, the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services affirmed that 22% of the 14,000 pupils in the school system receive some kind of special help. Two reasons are given for this high percentage. First, the school department's method of identification is considered effective. Second, social service personnel have encouraged clients to make use of the varied school programs in the city. Yet, public awareness of the Child Find process has been limited to "tried and true" procedures.

Documentation

Support for parental involvement with special needs children orginates in legal and governmental sources. Initially, the "de facto classification" premise of Serrano

versus Priest (1971) established the equality of educational opportunity for all children. This was later expanded and adjudicated by the federal courts with administrative directives on specific issues of law by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW).

Teitelbaum and Hiller (1977) recount court decisions regarding bilingual education. They demonstrate how bilingual students were erroneously classified as special needs students. Law versus Nichols (1974), a milestone case, relates to the precepts of Serrano and Priest as to educational opportunity. Hobson versus Hanson (1971) dealt with equal resources for children.

Litigation brought new state and federal laws. Specifically, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, enabled plantiffs to exercise fully governmental and legal resources. The Civil Rights Codes (Title VI and VII) and the Supreme Court made a series of rulings which benefited redress. Attorney fees which were the sole responsibility of the plantiff are now fully recoverable by the plantiff as a separate part of the judicial decision (Kirp, Buss, & Kuriliff, 1977). The Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens versus Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972) and Mills versus the Board of Education, District of Columbia (1972) focused on issues of handicapped people as to the right of an education, appropriate education and duties of school boards. Lorna versus the Board of Education of New York City (1974) and

Jose versus Ambach (1984) illustrate long legal battles over issues of appropriate costs, referrals and the classification of students.

The United States Supreme Court and adjunct courts did not formulate law. Instead, the courts interpreted legislation on key issues as the right of the child to profit from an education and the responsibilities of school boards to identify students with special needs. This enabled the Office of Civil Rights to withold funds under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for violations of Public Law 94-142. Because Public Law 94-142 provided the needed financial support for special needs students it also mandates that special needs children be identified consistent with the estimated incidence of special needs in the population.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Special Education Law of 1972, Chapter 766, preceded Public Law 94-142. With "up-front" appropriations in hand, school boards in Massachusetts implemented the new state law. Confirming the school age census was the initial step in determining future special needs appropriations.

Chapter 766, paragraph 303, made as part of each superintendent's annual report to the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education (consistent with Massachusetts General Law 72, section 2A) a yearly reporting plan to identify and service children in need of special education. Administration and approval of each district's plan is monitored by the appropriate regional office of the

Massachusetts Department of Special Education. The local education agency (LEA), the public schools, and the state educational agency (SEA), the Massachusetts State Department of Education, are jointly and separately held accountable for special education programs and services.

Challenges to Chapter 766 and Public Law 94-142 occurred in Massachusetts as a result of Special Education Audits and litigation. Such a case was Allen versus McDonough (1976). It concerned the largest school system in the Commonwealth, the Boston Public Schools (Riley & Johnson, 1979). Deemed in significant non-compliance with Chapter 766, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1976 gave its final approval to a consent decree. This was after years of parental petitions and audit findings over the quality and effectiveness of special education services. Noted in both the audit report and the consent decree was insufficient identification of children in need of special education and a lack of parent involvement. These were two among fifty areas named (Riley & Johnson, 1979).

In November of 1985, the City of Lynn, Massachusetts (KOC 2), entered into a consent decree due to numerous violations of the special education law, Chapter 766. A petition is pending in the United States District Court involving bilingual programs, educational opportunity and special services for Hispanic children (Cohen, 1985). Because of impending bankruptcy of the City of Lynn and its school department, the State of Massachusetts originated loans to

the City. Part of the funds for the schools were designated for the identification of children in need of special services (Cohen, 1985).

The town of Holbrook, Massachusetts, a South Shore community (KOC 3), was cited for many violations of Chapter 766 (Elia, 1986). The Massachusetts Department of Special Education Audit presented presumptive findings which suggest Holbrook was not meeting minimal requirements of law. Once more,the lack of identification of children with suspected special needs and lack of parental involvement were documented.

The assertiveness of the Massachusetts Department of Special Education is repeatedly attested to throughout the Commonwealth. Audits are viewed seriously by both school officials and the state department of special education.

Causes

The 1980 Massachusetts Department of Special Education Audit Report of the city's schools found no major areas of non-compliance. One-half of the report addressed services to bilingual children including identification and determination of special needs. Evidence of good-faith response to Chapter 766 was indicated in the development and expansion of special education services and programs at all levels in the school department.

The Child Find process of Project Outreach has been

reviewed yearly. Both the early childhood screening team and school officials have assessed methods and procedures. Technical changes have occurred. Reporting procedures have been consistent with the letter and intent of Chapter 766 and Chapter 72, section 2A. It is important to realize that kindergarten is not required under Massachusetts law although the city does provide kindergarten for regular, special needs and bilingual students.

A need to review Child Find strategies was indicated by four sources. First, Project Support, a state funded language modeling program for parents and paraprofessionals evolved as a result of increased referrals at the primary level. Second, a noticeable pattern of referrals for testing occurred over three years from 1982 - 1985. Third, kindergarten screening indicated increased services in the language development area. Teachers and specialists broached school officials as to the need to ascertain the reason for language referrals. Fourth, Project Support's community outreach suggested a general lack of public awareness of the city's Child Find mission.

Project Support - Phase II (1986), was funded by an Early Childhood Allocation Grant. Again emphasizing language development, an additional goal to expanded Child Find activities was added. A summer project, Project Support - Phase II developed several methods to "seek-out" children in need of special services especially in the Portuguese community. The rationale for targeting this population comes

from data of private special needs schools in the area. A cultural gap exists in the Portuguese community contributing to special education stereotypes.

Literature Review

This review of the literature regarding Child Find deals with the effectiveness and activities of the process nationally. Public Law 94-142 holds state and local educational agencies accountable for identifying children needing special education. This responsibility is separate and joint. The research indicates ways in which state and local educational agencies conduct Child Find. Degrees of responsibilities are documented. Less populated states such as Arkansas (Dean, 1979) and Kentucky (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1975) require more direction from their state directors. Maryland (NASDE, 1975) relies on sub-systems within the state to identify children in need of services. This is a mix of philosophical and administrative reasoning. In Texas, with larger student populations than Northeast school districts, Child Find is district, or regionally, orientated (Turner, 1976; Gilliam et al, 1978). Rhode Island even with state directives allows latitudes of judgment in the Child Find process to be locally shaped (Schennum & Siegel, 1978).

A state-wide media campaign to identify children in need of special education was launched by the Massachusetts

Association of School Superintendents in 1972. This effort was sanctioned by the Commonwealth relative to monitoring and implementing Chapter 766 on a regional and local basis. Predicated on early Puritan concepts, the Massachusetts Great and General Court has long affirmed local autonomy was necessary for effective and responsive education.

The goal of Child Find efforts is to identify and refer for further testing and evaluation children in need of special services. Several reports (Ray et al, 1981; Wood, 1981) emphasize "at risk" children. Missing from such reports is an equally important duty to inform the public of normal growth and development. The Parent Education and Demonstration Project (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 1976) is a program which sought to balance concerns.

Child Find strategies break down into two groups. First, there are direct methods of Child Find. These entail activities with personal contact. This usually involves a parent, social worker, contact person, medical professional or teacher. The parent, or guardian, is directed to the Child Find screening. To illustrate, contact workers in Dallas' Project Zero (Turner, 1976) and country fair sign-up booths in Pennsylvania (Laub, 1978) are direct contacts.

Second, there are indirect methods. These entail an intermediate agent. They are the traditional, classical, tried-and-true public awareness techniques. These include but are not limited to media contacts. Typical are media

bombardments utilizing spot announcements on television, radio and in newspapers. New Jersey's Project Child Find (Kratchman, 1981) and Dallas Independent School District's slogan campaign (Turner, 1976) typlify such efforts. Illinois' self audit (Illinois State Board of Education, 1982) found flyers and billboard advertisements (indirect tools) to be slightly more effective than newspapers and radio.

Effective public awareness campaigns vary due to area size, cultural diversity and available financial resources of state and local educational agencies. Legal mandates and constraints may also limit Child Find efforts.

The integrity of Child Find efforts and public awareness programs were seen in New York's Commission on the Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled (Ray et al, 1981) and Illinois' Delphi Studies (ISBE, 1982) demonstrating on-going commitments to validate and verify Child Find and public awareness procedures.

Unfortunately, the Parent Education and Demonstration Project (SACS, 1976) connotes inconsistencies within a well-designed program. The two stated goals of developing a knowledge of normal growth and development and utilizing local resources are clear. Still, the reader gets the sense that marked differences were noted in local resources and the acceptance of Child Find efforts.

Other findings indicate methodology and pedology. Inservice programs for staff and parents, Child Find packets,

and traveling Child Find screening teams rely on some kind of prior notice from either a local or state source.

The message in a number of the reports (ISBEA, 1982; Lindsay & Wedell, 1982; Chalfant, 1985) is that effective identification of children with special needs should be more comprehensive and repetitive throughout the child's schooling.

Relationship of Literature

Who should be screened? This is the most important question of the literature review. Each state in addition to Public Law 94-142 has its own special education law. Illinois (ISBE, 1982) is similar to Massachusetts asserting that anyone needing help should be screened. California's law like the Massachusetts' law came before Public Law 94-142 (Talley, 1982). But how do state officials determine the population to be screened? This decision is strongly influenced by interpretations of law, court decisions, the goal of state departments of special education and research.

Rhode Island (Schennum & Siegel, 1978) determined that all preschool children should be screened. The belief in early intervention theory is indicated. Chalfant (1985) concludes that growing evidence suggest a shift in not just who should be screened but when should screening be done.

The literature begins with efforts to identify anyone needing special education and the refining these efforts to

a particular population. To illustrate, Child Find efforts in the South (SACS, 1976) had two goals: (1) to identify children in need of special education and, (2) to teach normal development.

In Massachusetts, a problem exists similar to other states. The problem is unless a parent requests screening for their child nothing can be done. The parent becomes a prescreener. The parent is not only the child development expert but the medical expert as well. Unless the child presents substantial medical or physical need is special education aggressively sought. Complicating identification efforts are legal rights. Legal rights of the parent, the child and administrative-law requirements are spelled out in both federal and state laws.

How do you get the community to be aware of screening? And what strategies have been used? Publicity, direct or indirect, is essential to inform parents and others of available services. Because the parent is the prescreener, it is necessary to exercise a range of activities which illustrate the needs of children and the educational support available.

Most of the literature reviewed presented the legal background and philosophy of each Child Find effort. Absent in many reports were the reasons for the direct or indirect approaches. One notable exception is the Illinois self-audit (ISBE, 1982) which employed the Delphi technique to develop its Child Find package. Prediction and consensus

building using repeated questionnaires to three participating groups provided a firm foundation for the outreach.

In Massachusetts, Chapter 766 man ated verification of the school age population inorder to predict the amount of supportive services. This was for the total of the state's school population. Child Find sought anyone needing special help. This resulted in cities and towns accepting traditional outreach efforts. Litigation and audit findings by the Massachusetts Department of Special Education addressed legal issues especially the lack of outreach as in Boston, Massachusetts.

Locally, this city has complied with the mandates of Chapter 766. Utilizing contacts to social agencies, physicians and media announcements, the Child Find effort has remained basically unchanged.

In September, 1985, the Massachusetts Department of Education through its Bureau of Program Development and Evaluation initiated a new Early Childhood Special Education Allocation Program. Demonstrating its commitment to the development and expansion of early childhood programs for children, it is seeking to "...significantly increase the identification of three (3) and four (4) year old special needs children" (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1985).

In essence, the theme of the research is that outreach activities are vital in order to identify children who may be in need of special education. This exacts parents and

guardians to be informed about early childhood growth and development as well as supportive services and programs in the community. The public's perception of special education is based on stereotypes. State and local educational agencies have accepted their mandate but they need to establish parental support and continuity in outreach activities. Thus, public awareness of the Child Find program requires comprehensive outreach. With the Early Childhood Special Education Allocation Program comes renewed interest in locating children in need of supportive services. This is the unserved population. Special contacts with the parent through community groups and an educational support tool would help to expand public awareness of Child Find.

Chapter III

Anticipated Outcomes

The basis for the anticipated outcomes was found in the general and specific objectives. The three general objectives of this practicum were:

1. to expand awareness of Child Find in the community using an existing program.
2. to develop a locally produced videotape of the Child Find process for use in the community.
3. to communicate to community members and viewers the importance of Child Find.

Community and non-public school service members were the target population. These members or viewers completed a questionnaire regarding the videotape and their own feelings concerning the Child Find information. In addition, the same questionnaire was used by a previewing group of 15 professional staff within and without the community. This was prior to the community outreach activity.

Thirteen specific objectives addressed by the previewers and the target population were that the community member or viewer completed favorably a rating scale:

1. as to the length of the videotape.
2. as to the presentation of the social and economic aspects of the community in the videotape.

3. as to the presentation of present publicity efforts of the school department in the videotape.
4. as to the illustration of educational and medical tools and techniques in the videotape.
5. as to the presentation of the legal basis of Child Find in the videotape.
6. as to the illustration of early childhood behavior during screening in the videotape.
7. as to informing parents of their rights in the videotape.
8. as to the presentation of the contact person for screening in the videotape.
9. as to the positive presentation of the Child Find process in the videotape.
10. on the ability to make referrals through the Child Find process.
11. on acquiring knowledge about parent's rights.
12. on the worthwhile use of time to view the Child Find videotape.
13. on the ability to develop further questions concerning Child Find and other programs in school department.

Instrumentation

Each participant (i.e. community member or viewer) was asked to complete a Likert type questionnaire consisting of nineteen items. A five point scale (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree) was used. Every item related to an objective of the practicum. The items reflect the respondent's perceptions relative to the kind, amount and need for information about the Child Find process with existing programs and services. A "not applicable" category (NA) was added to each scale item inorder to provide for individual differences. In addition, a comment section was provided for each item as well as a general comment section at the end of the questionnaire.

A qualitative measure of the verbal interaction between the initiator (the author) and the participants (the community members) provided informal data about the inservices/discussions. The verbal feedback indicated the nature of the participants as learning group members.

Chapter IV

Solution Strategy

Historically, stereotypes of special needs individuals have hampered the development of positive public images (Longmore, 1986). Political and social perceptions were really forms of discrimination. Public awareness efforts must, as the California Foundation on Employment and Disabilities Project demonstrates (Longmore, 1986), develop media awareness campaigns to present positive profiles of the handicap.

Developing and implementing educational services, directly or indirectly, meant public and parent involvement. Parents of special needs children were perceived by school officials as "troublemakers" (Lipsky & Weatherley, 1974) then "shareholders" (Riley & Johnson, 1977). The reason was parents complained and questioned authorities. Bronfenbrenner's (1974) early intervention strategies advocated that parents must become "partners" with the school. The rewards of the partnership benefit the school and the child. For example, the need to develop on-going systems to deal with children's problems is reinforced by parental awareness and/or involvement (Wahlberg, 1984). Respect for all parties is enhanced through sharing concerns (Brofenbrenner, 1974; Cain, 1980).

Current studies of parental participation identify parental enthusiasm, attitude and respect as most important.

A three year pilot project (newborns to three years) in Missouri found parental enthusiasm to be more important than socioeconomic status (SES) or single parent status ("Parents as Teachers", 1985).

An extensive project of the Milwaukee metropolitan area found parental actions and attitude at home to be the most positive learning factor. Dr. Witte of the University of Wisconsin conducted the twenty-two school district study. Findings suggest specific activities such as parent readings and parent interactions of preschool children to be less crucial ("Defining Involvement", 1985).

Parent involvement, participation and perceptions support a child's learning. Herman and Yen (1983) surveyed two hundred and fifty-six schools in California inorder to evaluate early childhood programs with related student performances in grades two and three. This study strongly supports parental participation and awareness as contributing positively to student's academic success.

Paul Lawrence's classic management article "How to Deal with Resistance to Change" (1969) is noteworthy. Three key themes are presented. First, technical change and innovation are related to human change. Second, participation by management with non-management has to be based on respect. Third, the attitude of the people relative to job satisfaction lends itself to creative solutions. The influential words appear to be "human change", "participation", and "respect".

The message for school officials is clear. Parental awareness and participation promotes support for programs and respect for the schools. Yet, funds are not readily available either on the state or federal levels for public relations purposes. Making the public aware of educational services and programs falls upon the teachers and the school administrators as secondary functions.

Legislators are reluctant to appropriate funds if the return on such expenditures are not immediate ("Hard Sell", 1986). The hard sell becomes the common avenue to promote educational programs and services. Continued public awareness and parental support provide acceptance of policies of the schools.

The strategy of the practicum was based on community contacts with day care centers, public housing associations and related school groups. Working through Project Support's outreach effort parent meetings and inservice offerings, a list of six sites were selected for the project presentations. The Assistant Superintendent for Special Services was also notified as to the sites and dates for the practicum presentations. The time frame was October, 1986, through mid-February, 1987.

During the month of September, 1986, the videotape of the school department's Child Find efforts, which was written and produced by the author several months previously, was completed and edited. The assistance of the television teacher at the high school was utilized for the production

aspects of the videotape. The writer participated in the videotape as the narrator.

The videotape was 7.5 minutes in length. Visuals were sequenced in five second frames for certain segments such as the community and the setting. The sequencing of school staff explaining or illustrating some phase of the screening process varied depending on the topic. A character generator was used for all wording and visual reinforcements such as listing the areas screened by the personnel.

Procedure

Community members were invited to an open house and inservices at day care centers plus a public meeting of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council. Announcements of the presentations were made through letters to parents by directors of the day care centers, newspaper announcements, and notices given out door-to-door at three public housing locations. Community managers at the three public housing locations assisted in arranging space for the presentations.

Each community member or previewer was given a questionnaire immediately following the presentation of the videotape of Child Find. Each was asked to respond using the scale provided. Upon completing the questionnaire, the community members were asked by the initiator (the author) if they had any questions or comments about the videotape and the programs and services of the school department.

Calendar of
Presentations and Inservices

Site	Month	Parents	Staff
Previewers at 4 locations.	September - October, 1986.		15
Day Care Center Open House	October, 1986.	6	
Day Care Center Inservice	October - November, 1986.		8
Special Education Parent Advisory Council.	December, 1986.	2	
Public Housing	January, 1987.		
Site A		3	
Site B		4	
Site C		None	
Day Care Center Inservice (3 combined)	February, 1987.		29

Discussions occurred at all sites. The length of the presentations and discussions ranged from one hour at public housing locations to two hours at day care centers.

The previewers were invited to view the videotape at the high school and administration building. Special arrangements were made for viewing the videotape at both facilities depending on the schedules of professional staff. The two previewers from outside the city viewed the videotape at an independent university location.

Participants

A total of 67 community members or viewers participated in this practicum. Fifteen previewers were people employed within and without the school department. Job function of these individuals were: clerk (1), special needs teachers (2), Title I supervisor (1), school nurses (3), elementary and special education supervisors (3), learning disabled teachers and speech therapists (3). Additionally, two professionals (a psychologist and a kindergarten teacher) outside of the school system viewed and rated the videotape. Fifty-two community members viewed the videotape and participated in the discussions which followed. All community members interact with children. Ages of community members range from adolescence through the grandparent level.

Thirty-seven community members employed by day care centers service approximately 625 children at 5 sites within

and outside the community. One day care school has several branches. Fifteen participants were community members living in public housing or interested in public school programs and services.

Unanticipated Problems

Producing the videotape in itself required considerable contacts and arrangements. Individual schedules of the people varied. Even with a prepared script, cancellations by staff and the person doing the taping caused delays. Staging in different locations and retaping prolonged the filming. Five editing sessions were required to correct problems regarding erasures, misspellings and audiogenic factors in the videotape.

Previewing of the videotape by professionals was conducted at four locations including the high school and administration building. Scheduling was a problem for many people.

Arranging inservice and community viewing sessions required rescheduling. This was due to the holidays, lack of advance notice of the event and weather conditions. Also many locations did not have the necessary equipment, video cassette recorder or television. Special arrangements, such as at the Special Education Parent Advisory meeting, had to be made due to building accessibility for the handicap.

Chapter V

Results

The outcomes of this practicum were based on three general objectives. They were:

1. to expand awareness of Child Find in the community using an existing program.
2. to develop a locally produced videotape of the Child Find process for use in the community.
3. to communicate to community members and viewers the importance of Child Find.

Through the use of the questionnaire two tables were developed to indicate how the community members or viewers responded. Tables I and II present the range, mean and standard deviation (SD) for each questionnaire item of the two groups participating in this project.

The previewers' mean scores for items 1 - 10 which deal with general objective 2. range from 3.92 to 4.87. The largest SD is 1.07 for item number 9. This has to do with the videotape illustrating the city's cultural and social mix. Ninety percent of items 1 - 10 were above 4.0 on a 5.0 scale. This suggests that the previewers agree the videotape of the Child Find process was quite adequate relative to the presentation of the outreach effort, the screening process, legal sources and contacts. Other than items 5 and 9, the SD was .75 or lower. Item 5 dealing with

Table 1

Responses of 15 Previewers

Item	Range	SD	Mean
1. The videotape provided a brief but adequate picture of the Child Find process.	1	.35	4.89
2. The videotape presented several examples of the school's publicity effort.	1	.35	4.87
3. The videotape provided an accurate picture of the educational and medical screening process.	2	.65	4.57
4. The videotape presented examples of screening procedures.	2	.74	4.47
5. The videotape showed a sample of early childhood behavior.	3	1.00	3.92
6. The videotape indicated the legal basis of Child Find.	1	.40	4.80
7. The videotape presented a reference to parent's rights in the Child Find process.	2	.65	4.57
8. The videotape provided information regarding contacts and referrals for screening.	1	.40	4.80
9. The videotape provided a sample of the city's social and cultural mix.	3	1.07	4.00
10. The videotape presents screening procedures positively.	1	.40	4.80
11. The presentation was worth my time to view it.	1	.46	4.73
12. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of Child Find efforts.	1	.44	4.77

13. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of screening.	2	.67	4.30
14. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of the school system.	2	.70	4.33
15. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of parent's rights.	2	.75	4.50
16. The videotape indicates to me the importance of the Child Find effort.	1	.49	4.66
17. The videotape would help me to make referrals through the Child Find process.	1	.47	4.72
18. The videotape caused me to have further questions about Child Find.	3	1.62	3.11
19. The videotape provided me with a source of information not previously available.	2	.72	4.44

examples of early childhood behavior had the lowest mean score and the second highest SD of responses. Item 10 presents a good mean score but the SD was the highest of all items. This item addresses the positive presentation of the Child Find process. Both of these items had a range (i.e. largest measure minus the smallest measure) of 3. As a satisfactory measure of variability, it does provide a measure to make inferences.

The mean scores for items 11 - 19 which deal with general objectives 1 and 3 are distributed from 3.11 to 4.77. The largest SD was for item 18 which explores the viewers' ability to ask questions about the Child Find process. Better than 90 % of the viewers responded that they agreed the videotape and presentation caused them to increase their knowledge and awareness of the school system's Child Find process. An indication of the importance of Child Find was evidenced by the previewers' mean score of 4.66 and only a range of 1. The previewers expressed little variance in the importance of the outreach.

The range of scores indicates little variation in responses by the viewers on items 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and some variation on items 14, 15 and 19. The lowest mean and the largest SD was indicated for item 18. Inotherwords, the largest disagreement focused on whether or not the respondents acquired information about Child Find that was not previously available.

The community members' mean scores for items 1 - 10

Table 2

Responses of 52 Community Members

Item	Range	SD	Mean
1. The videotape provided a brief but adequate picture of the Child Find process.	2	.51	4.22
2. The videotape presented several examples of the school's publicity effort.	1	.47	4.31
3. The videotape provided an accurate picture of the educational and medical screening process.	2	.51	4.29
4. The videotape presented examples of screening procedures.	2	.57	4.07
5. The videotape showed a sample of early childhood behavior.	3	.96	3.17
6. The videotape indicated the legal basis of Child Find.	3	.80	4.00
7. The videotape presented a reference to parent's rights in the Child Find process.	3	.93	3.97
8. The videotape provided information regarding contacts and referrals for screening.	3	.71	4.10
9. The videotape provided a sample of the city's social and cultural mix.	3	.81	4.02
10. The videotape presents screening procedures positively.	3	.68	4.20
11. The presentation was worth my time to view it.	2	.61	4.41

12. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of Child Find efforts.	3	.70	4.25
13. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of screening.	2	.62	4.31
14. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of the school system.	3	.80	3.96
15. The videotape allowed me to increase my knowledge of parent's rights.	3	.84	3.89
16. The videotape indicates to me the importance of the Child Find effort.	3	.63	4.24
17. The videotape would help me to make referrals through the Child Find process.	3	.67	4.14
18. The videotape caused me to have further questions about Child Find.	3	.94	3.83
19. The videotape provided me with a source of information not previously available.	3	.98	3.81

ranged from 3.17 to 4.31. The largest SD is .96 for item 5 followed by a .93 for item 7. Unlike previewers, the community members responded that they felt undecided about the representation of early childhood behavior. This item reflects specific objective 5 and general objective 3. The range of responses for item 5 was greater for the community members than the previewers. This was true of most items.

Eight of the first ten items yielded a mean score of 4.00 or better for the community members. Stated differently, the community members agreed that the videotape showed the Child Find process positively such as outreach efforts, community contacts and legal mandates.

The mean scores for items 11 - 19 which deal with general objectives 1 and 3 are distributed from a low of 3.81 to a high of 4.41. The range of scores indicates disagreement among community members. Yet, the mean hovers around the 4.00 level. With only a range of 2, the community members indicated that their time was well spent. In addition, their knowledge of Child Find and the importance of the effort were indicated strongly in items 11 and 13.

As to formulating or stimulating further questions about Child Find and existing programs/services, the range suggests differences among the community members as shown by the SD. In comparison, the previewers' responses to items 18 and 19 show the greatest disparity. The cause of this disparity is found in the professional background which the community members lack.

Both groups provided their perceptions and feelings regarding the videotape and the presentations. A general picture can be developed from these responses as described through the range, SD and the mean.

The discussions by community members provide a basis for a qualitative assessment of the sessions. Smaller groups were more spontaneous than larger groups. Participants within the smaller groups related their questions to personal concerns and interest. To illustrate, a common concern was that if a child was found to have a special need did this subsequently mean the child would remain in a special education class for the entire length of the child's schooling. The initiator of the discussion would respond appropriately emphasizing that the evaluation team (with written consent of the parent or guardian) would make such decisions on an individual basis. Also stressed by the initiator was that the special education law in Massachusetts, Chapter 766, is non-categorical. This allows the parent, as a part of the educational team, latitudes in designing and implementing supportive services.

Another question frequently asked related to an explanation of the difference between preschool and kindergarten screeening. Parents and day care providers wanted to clarify in their minds the intent and purpose of these programs. Specific concerns of individual parents and day care providers were answered with respect for both the parent's and child's legal rights.

The extent of participants involvement in the discussions of the Child Find process and school programs arise relative to physical and social environments. For example, one day care director was concerned about parents' response to the day care center making referrals for screening. In one case, the day care director stated, a parent of the child in question immediately removed the child from the day care center when it was suggested that the child should be screened for possible developmental delays. The day care director was concerned because the parent perceived the preschool environmental as merely " baby sitting ". This specific concern of the day care director was addressed by the Project Support staff. The staff responded by implementing a policy to observe any child in his/her preschool setting as long as parental permission was granted. This shifted a possible burden from the day care director to the school department in a less threating manner for both the child and the parent. This discussion resulted in establishing better communications with non-LEA's to benefit the child. Also, it demonstrates to the other participants the relationship the school department wishes to maintain with non-LEA's.

The atmosphere of the inservices promoted inquiry. New channels of communications were established between the LEA and the non-LEA's. Participants' questions were constructive because environment stimulated discussions which were important to them.

Discussion

The outcomes of this practicum as indicated by the questionnaire affirm the goals were attained. Both groups agreed as to the positive presentation and increased awareness of the Child Find program. The item responses further demonstrate the design, operation and technical aspects of the Child Find process carried out by the school department. Furthermore, item comments and general comments although limited add some insight to the participants' responses. Negative comments related to background noises at one site; otherwise, the respondents' declarations fell into two categories. First, the production was well done and interesting. Second, the production left the viewer wanting more information. The goals of this practicum were educational and informational. It appears the videotape and the discussions support the conclusion that all general objectives were attained satisfactorily.

In conclusion, the discussion sessions evolved well because the videotape appeared to break down apprehensions as well as creating interest. Participants felt good about the presentation and they had a receptive attitude regarding the information. Reflective thinking was revealed in the participants' desire to help children by seeking to clarify, to ventilate and to discovery ways to use local resources.

Dissemination

The practicum is an action orientated problem solving project. Throughout the development of the project, explanations of Child Find and the objectives of the program were presented to people inside and outside of the school department. The writer also had the videotape screened by the educational reporter of the local newspaper which resulted in a positive article about presentations at the public housing locations. This newspaper has a daily circulation of 45,000.

During the filming and editing of the videotape, several high school film classes viewed portions of the videotape. The writer on several occasions had to explain to individual students the goals of Child Find. This kind of local dissemination has future implications; inotherwords, these students as future parents may have a need to know about programs and services offered by the school department.

On the local level, the videotape has been incorporated into the materials used by Project Support. Since the implementation period of this practicum, the videotape was viewed by 16 more parents at community meetings and day care centers. The local Lions Club has expressed an interest in the Child Find videotape along with a local latch-key program. Inter-agency contacts by the writer and other members of the Project Support staff have resulted in a presentation of the film to home care providers through an

Office for Children Program operating in the area. The procedures described in this report are being continued through Project Support.

Further dissemination on a national level through professional presentations at conferences and journal articles will be sought by the writer. This practicum is different from other projects in the literature because it combines a locally produced videotape with discussion techniques to educate and inform community members. It shows a home based approach to assist parents in making decisions about children.

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APPENDIX A

CHILD FIND VIDEOTAPE

OUTLINE

Child Find Videotape

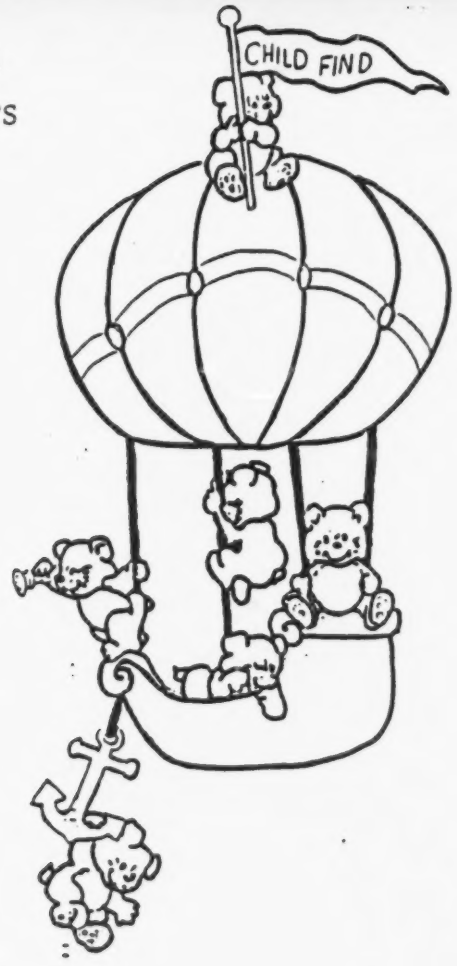
Shot	Seconds	Dialogue
1. Visual: Title	5	Title: Child Find (Project Outreach) and music.
2. Pan City Waterfront Walking City Hall	43	Music only.
3. Federal Bldg. Cape Verdean Sign Carney Academy Portuguese Center GNBHC- Health Center	25	The historic City of New Bedford is located in Southeastern Massachusetts. It is an urban City of some 103,000 people. Local industry includes fishing, clothing and electronic manufacturing. The City has many ethnic and cultural groups. Recent arrivals have included Portuguse, Spanish and Asian people. The community has many religious and cultural activities consistent with the traditions of the area.
4. Nursery Child Find Posters Person Screening Child.	45	The New Bedford Public Schools through Project Outreach conducts a Child Find. This is a community outreach effort to identify 3,4 and 5 year old children in need of supportive services. In New Bedford approximately 1500 students are served through Project Outreach. This includes 2 preschool and 4 early childhood classes. Screening programs are conducted throughout the school year inorder to seek out children in need of help.
5. Narrator	10	Hello. My name is_____ I am a _____ in the City's schools.
Visual: Legal Basis	20	This presentation will help you to become aware of the schools outreach effort.
Notices **Standard Times** **Portuguese Newspaper**	8	First, advertisements are and the Portuguese newspapers. Second, Letters and notices to physicians and human

	Pediatric Sign 15 Catholic Sign Narrator WLNE Sign	agencies in the community. Third, notices are sent to churches and day care centers in the community. Fourth, Announcements are made on the local media including the Portuguese news station.
6.	Narrator 14 Visual: Speech & Language Parent Questionnaire Gross & Fine Motor Vision & Hearing Taking child's picture Two children in activity Teacher Helping.	The Child Find process involves a number of developmental screening tests. When you arrive at the screening area your child will be photographed and see several developmental specialists.
	Visual: 16 Parent Questionnaire	(Music with insert.)
	Nurse 34 Brigance Cover ERIN Questionnaire Form Nurse	(Explains in her own words Developmental Questionnaire.)
7.	Visual: 23 Speech & Hearing Screening Therapist doing test on a child.	(Music with insert.) (Narrator) Here is_____ a Speech and Language Therapist in the ity's schools. She is conducting Speech and Language Tes to determine if a special need exists.
8.	Visual: 15 Gross & Fine Motor and General Knowledge Show boy jumping. 10 Show boy cutting. Show girl holding object.	(Music with insert.) (Narrator) During preschool screening a number of tests are are done to see if the child can manipulate tools, identify colors.
9.	Visual: 24 Vision & Hearing Screening Vision Nurse 58 Showing Card	(Music with insert.) (Explains in her own words the Goode Lite Vision Test.)

	Circling Hand Back to Nurse		
	Speech Therapist Audiometer Controls Back to Therapist		(Explains in her own words the screening test. Specific attention to the way young children are tested.)
10.	Narrator	9	In the afternoon the screening team mets to determine what action is necessary.
	Visual: No Problem Refer for Special Test Refer for further testing and evaluation.	14	One of three actions are made: no problem exists, refer for special test, refer for further testing and evaluation.
11.	Visual: For further information call the New Bedford Public Schools 997-4511, extension 319.	11	(Narrator continues). For further information call school department at 997-4511, extension 319.
12.	Credits and Acknowledgements		(Bring up music and fade out).

APPENDIX B

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Dear Parents,

Do you notice any problem with your three or four year old child...

- Talking ?
- Behaving ?
- Walking ?
- Playing ?
- Seeing ?

or

- Listening ?

He/she may need help. PLEASE come to a SHORT informational meeting on CHILDFIND. A Special Education Team will discuss the program, inform you of what is available, and answer your questions. We Hope to see you!

The Standard Times
Tuesday, January 13, 1987
Daily Circulation 45,000

Video takes the mystery out of preschool service

By Susan Pawlak-Seaman
Standard-Times staff writer

NEW BEDFORD — A video chock full of information — delivered with a special homey touch — is Project Support's latest tool in its quest to give all kids an equal chance at education.

Support, run by the New Bedford Public Schools, will be taken on the project staff's first visit this week into three of the city's public housing sites.

"That's where many of the youngsters we're trying to reach are," said staff member Paul Operach. He explained that the project offers free screening and services to children 3 and 4 years old who are lagging developmentally behind their peers.

Operach stressed that Project Support isn't simply "special needs." Rather than extensive remedial programs, many of the children need only a little extra attention or help to put them on a par with others their age, he said.

Both he and Maria Benevides, a teacher working with Support, said the 7½-minute video, featuring scenes of New Bedford and a summary of Support services, is largely designed to break down parents' fears.

Mrs. Benevides said that she has discovered that "people didn't know what happened to these kids" once their families sought aid from Project Support.

The video shows such things as vision, hearing and motor development tests.

Filming the video in New Bedford was seen as another way of making parents feel more comfortable about Project Support, Operach said.

Lucille Caron, assistant superintendent of special needs, "has wanted to start a visual library, something that is community-oriented," Operach said. She wanted people to see something they could relate to — not a program that was based in another city or town, he said.

Operach and Mrs. Benevides said Project Support is also available to provide in-service programs for the city's nurseries and day care centers, as well as any interested parent or civic organizations.

This week's schedule for the public housing visits follows. The times, in each instance, is 3 to 4 p.m.:

Today, Brickenwood Community House; Wednesday, Evergreen Park Community House; and Thursday, Presidential Heights Community House.